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YEAR BOOK
OF THE
HEATHER
SOCIETY

1975



ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS
KEW



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Obituary



We record with much regret on the 2nd October 1974, the death of P. S. Patrick founder member of the Society and former Editor.

Farewell to a 'Man of Letters'

When I offered to help Pat with the Year Book in the Spring of 1972 with a view to eventually succeeding him I realised, as everyone else did who knew him, that here was a man with a remarkable knowledge of heathers and plants generally, gathered from a lifetime spent in Horticulture, commencing many years ago with an apprenticeship at Wisley.

I asked him if he would write an article for the Year Book, a brief autobiography if you like, but he declined, he was too modest a man, but he did write a few words of how this publication was first formed and I'm very pleased to be able to print this article now.

"It was at the first Committee Meeting after the Inaugural Meeting of the Society that the question of having some form of journal to record the activities of the Society and its members was approved. The founder of the society, Sir John Charrington, was the first chairman, and I remember the shock I had when he leant over the table and asked if I would be editor.

I had done some writing on heathers but knew little about an editor's job, which I told him. The committee greatly daring gave me full powers to choose the form the book should take, the size, the colour and the quality of cover and paper to be used. At the next meeting they were kind enough to adopt all my suggestions. I felt the book should be of a size to be easily carried about in a man's pocket or lady's handbag, so I took the style of *The Countryman* magazine as my pattern. It was felt the quality of production should be good and we have endeavoured to maintain it from that time, although we know we could get a cheaper job done.

In the early Spring I commence my search for articles for the next Year Book (published in March) by writing to members in different parts of the world. With very few exceptions they have been most co-operative and the majority are kind enough to send me something by the end of November which we reckon as the deadline for material to be in my hands. Mrs. MacLeod and Mr.

London help in the preparation of scripts and the printer has them in the first week of January. After the checking of galley and page proofs the books are delivered to Mrs. MacLeod by early March.

I endeavour to keep a balance of articles printed with some technical ones e.g. pests, diseases, soil fertility etc. with the triumphs and disappointments of members in their gardens or accounts of their voyaging abroad. In addition, commencing in 1964 we have had articles from overseas members, some of whom it has been my privilege to meet".

No words of mine can do justice to the big man, but Fred Chapple, now alas also departed, had an apt turn of phrase and I quote from the opening paragraphs of two letters that he wrote to him in December 1970 and October 1971.

"Your letter came like a breath of moorland air"

"I always look forward to a letter from you as it comes like a bracing tonic from afar".

What more can one say except that thankfully we have *Erica cinerea*. 'P. S. Patrick' to remember him by, described as 'a lusty long flowering cultivar'. How true of the plant, and of the man.

A.J.S.



A special colour tribute to Mr. Patrick appears on the centre pages by courtesy of Mr. B. G. London who supplied the slides, and Stratton Litho and Co. Ltd. who carried out the art work.



" lying from morning till evening on a bank of heather in the middle of the moors, with the bees humming dreamily about the blooms, and larks singing high up overhead, and the blue sky and bright sun shining steadily and cloudlessly". — *Emily Bronte*.

The President Writes

Sir John Charrington, Aston Rowant, Oxfordshire

Living, as I now do, in a chalky area and with no friends or neighbours growing heathers, I find myself hearing nothing of changes and new varieties and so Mrs. MacLeod's Bulletins and the Year Book become of greater value each year; but it is surprising how quickly one seems to be out of date.

When our old home at Crockham Hill in Kent was sold, I regretfully left a garden fairly full of heathers, and it was pleasing to know that the new owner was interested and would continue their cultivation; but I did miss them. It can, then, be appreciated what a delightful surprise it was when early this Spring Mr. and Mrs. Pitch turned up at our new home in Oxfordshire with a basket of winter flowering heathers beautifully arranged around a centre of primroses from what was ours and is now their garden. A very kindly thought.

Many will have seen by now the new book on heathers by Mr. and Mrs. Proudley which brings out the charm of the various colours more than anything else – much more so, in my view, than any other book. I feel sure that this publication should do much to encourage the growing of heathers.



Jottings from the Chairman

Alfred H. Bowerman, Champs Hill, Coldwaltham, Pulborough, Sussex

The Heather Society has suffered a sad loss in the death of Mr. P. S. Patrick known to many of us as 'Pat'. One of the founder members of the Society and for many years Editor of the Year Book, he devoted the whole of his life to the growing of heathers. He was a man whose humility and natural charm won the respect and affection

of all who were privileged to know him. The passing of this kindly gentleman leaves a gap which will be hard to fill.

* * *

During the year my wife and I have been pleased to welcome many of you to our home at 'Champs Hill' Pulborough, Sussex, and were particularly delighted to entertain some forty members of 'Ericultura', the Dutch Heather Society, in August.

The Conference at Stirling this Summer gave us an opportunity to meet many Scottish members who provided a fascinating programme which we all enjoyed. In 1975 we hope as many members as possible will come to the conference planned to be held at Moor Park, Farnham, Surrey on September 12-14.

As 1974 draws to its close, a year which has seen chaos in the world of politics and economics, it is heartening to walk amongst the heathers and forget the malaise of a materialistic society. Nature too has had to face the vagaries of the seasons; a cold spring, an early summer drought, followed by the wettest autumn in living memory, yet in spite of all, it overcomes its adversities. What a thrill in these darkening winter days to see the carneas bursting into colour, a portent we hope of happier days ahead. May this be the experience of you all by the time these lines reach you.



The Botanical Garden, The University of British Columbia

Ken Wilson

To people who have a special interest in heathers, it would seem that the climate of Canada's west coast can support all but the most tender species. Generally speaking, this is true. The weather of the Vancouver area is similar to that of Britain, with perhaps more winter

rainfall, interspersed with cold spells and extremely low humidity. The summers are pleasantly warm, sunny and dry. The soil pH is between 6 and 6.8. The magnificent panorama of mountains would seem to provide an additional incentive to grow heathers. Nevertheless, the varieties grown here are generally limited to cultivars of *Erica carnea*, *Calluna vulgaris*, and occasionally *E. x darleyensis* and *E. vagans*. In addition, the number of different cultivars planted of each species is very limited.

Perhaps the reason lies in the fact that Canadians are not avid gardeners and their gardens, while neat and tidy, are mainly utilitarian. However, a growing interest in ornamental plants is indicated by the increased membership in specialized plant societies and the many gardening classes offered by educational institutions.

I think my interest in heathers began unconsciously with hiking weekends in the Derbyshire Moors and was expanded later when I became foreman of the American Department, which included heathers, of Clibran's Nurseries in Cheshire. My first 15 years in Canada were spent in the eastern parts where only *E. carnea* survived with any degree of certainty. Now, for the past four years my responsibility for the operations of the new Botanical Garden has enabled me to renew my interest.

The Botanical Garden includes three distinct areas of the Campus:

- 1 an established area planted 12 to 15 years ago:
- 2 a five-acre nursery;
- 3 55 acres of undeveloped land on which the major garden will be developed, with the first construction just under way.

The established area contains the largest single planting of heaths and heathers on the Campus and consists of a steep, north-facing bank about 12 feet wide by 1000 feet long, which borders a main road. Here, blocks of heathers are interspersed with groups of various spreading junipers, *Pernettya mucronata*, *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* and *Viburnum Davidii*. Three large blocks of *E. carnea* 'Aurea' always produce an excellent display from Decem-

ber and the new golden foliage in the spring provides an added attraction. *E. x darleyensis* 'Silberschmelze' and 'George Rendall' are vigorous and excellent ground-covers; their dark green foliage is always attractive and their long flowering season from October to April cannot be matched. *E. carnea* 'Vivellii' flowers profusely, but its dark foliage does not show to advantage against a close background of trees. The cultivar 'King George', planted four years ago, remains tight and compact at four inches high, but two or more years' growth are required to evaluate its mass effect. *Calluna* 'H. E. Beale' and 'C. W. Nix' are the most floriferous and vigorous of this species growing on the bank. Both of these cultivars require a heavy clipping each year to prevent them from becoming woody and old looking. The cultivars 'Alba Plena', 'Serlei', 'Cuprea', 'Serlei Aurea' and 'Aurea' are less vigorous, with the latter two showing only faint traces of their coloured foliage. 'Mullion', which grows and flowers reasonably well, is not showy enough for this location. *E. vagans* 'Mrs. D. F. Maxwell' and 'Lyonesse', which flower ahead of the Callunas, always provide a striking display.

In the fall of 1970 we received a gift of 100 cultivars of heathers from Mrs. Pamela Harper in Maryland, U.S.A. They were potted and over-wintered in a cold frame and planted out in nursery beds the following spring. At least one cutting was taken from each plant as a precaution against loss of the original. Some losses occurred in the summer from *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, no doubt brought on by watering in hot, dry weather.

The following spring all plants were lightly sheared and moved to a new, exposed, well-drained site in the nursery. Cultivars within a species were grouped together to permit easy comparison of their growth habits. Peat moss and a dressing of superphosphate were added prior to planting. A soil moisture block was placed in a strategic location to measure available soil moisture, and thus avoid unnecessary watering, and reduce the risk of *Phytophthora*.

The following is a summary of notes made in 1973.

Of the *E. carnea* cultivars, 'Springwood White' is the most vigorous; 'Pirbright Rose', 'Springwood Pink', 'December Red' and 'Loughrigg' are a close second. The last two have a somewhat flatter habit. 'Praecox Rubra' and 'Heathwood' form a tight compact mound. 'Foxhollow Fairy', 'Prince of Wales', 'King George', 'Atrorubra' and 'Vivellii' have medium vigour and a similar habit of growth.

Our only *E. ciliaris* 'Mrs. C. H. Gill', now eight inches high, flowered from July 25 to early October. *E. cinerea* 'Apple Blossom', 'Hookstone Lavender' and 'Vivienne Patricia' are strong growers but a little straggly. 'Grandiflora' does not show this tendency and has outflowered the other cultivars. *E. Mackaiana* 'Plena' has not done well and probably needs more moisture. However, *E. Tetralix*, which grows close to *E. Mackaiana* has done extremely well. The latter are compact and six to eight inches high. 'Alba Mollis' is particularly striking, with its silvery gray foliage and white flowers. 'Pink Star', 'Ken Underwood' and 'Rubra', similar in habit and flowering period, were at their best in early July. 'Con Underwood' reached its peak in late July. All four have many flowers in early November and are almost competing with the *carnea* species at this time.

E. vagans 'Lyonesse', 'Mrs. D. F. Maxwell' and 'Mrs. S. Donaldson' are equally vigorous with the last flowering about two weeks later than the other two. *E. erigena* 'Superba' and 'W. T. Rackliff' are both tight, compact plants about 12 ins. high and have not suffered any winter damage. *E. x darleyensis* 'Silberschmelze' is outstanding and resembles the *carnea* species in growth and flowering habit. On the other hand, 'Arthur Johnson', 'Furzey', 'George Rendall', 'Ghost Hills' and 'Darley Dale' are like the *E. erigena*.

E. x watsonii 'Dawn' and 'H. Maxwell' are vigorous and showy and flower from July to November. 'P. D. Williams' is more compact but equally free-flowering. *E. 'Stuartii'* is a neat, compact grower which flowered from mid-July to September. *Daboecia cantabrica* and 'Alba' were damaged by the winter and are only just

regaining their vigour. 'Praegerae', however, came through unscathed and is now a small, compact plant six inches high which flowered in July.

Of the 40 cultivars of *Calluna vulgaris*, only those with coloured foliage showed any sign of winter damage. 'Beoley Gold' was undamaged and is by far the best of our six golden cultivars. 'Robert Chapman' has proven hardier than 'Sunset' or 'Orange Queen', although the latter retain their intense orange-red colour for a longer period. For all round foliage performance, 'Cuprea' is hard to beat. Its centenary in 1973 as an FCC winner is well justified. In the medium-to-tall growing group of *Calluna*, 'H. E. Beale' remains outstanding. 'C. W. Nix' is better than 'Alportii'. 'Drum-Ra', 'Hiemalis' and 'Underwoodii' are vigorous, free-flowering, and free-seeding, their offshoots springing up throughout the whole area. All of the white-flowered cultivars are less vigorous than their coloured counterparts, and often appear to be starved, although this trait seems to disappear in cool weather. Of the low-growing types, 'County Wicklow' is compact and very floriferous. 'J. H. Hamilton' and 'Foxhollow Wanderer' are equally showy and cover at least twice the area of the former. The mound forms, which seem to fascinate people who are unfamiliar with heathers, have flowered for the first time this year. 'Alba Rigida' was the most floriferous.

The short time this collection has been established and my own limited experience with heathers in this region is perhaps insufficient to assess their growth and hardiness. However, I am certain that their potential use as ornamentals and their value as a groundcover in reducing garden maintenance has not been fully appreciated in the Vancouver area.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest to members living in the Canadian and American Pacific Northwest that we meet as a group to examine the possibilities of promoting the aims and objectives of the Heather Society in this region.



Small Bulbs in the Heather

Lord Skelmersdale, Taunton, Somerset

I have no doubt that members of the Heather Society have no need to be reminded that heaths and heathers provide, through the choice of species and varieties, flower on practically every day of the year. You may, however, be surprised to learn that another group of flowers have the same characteristic. In the last two and a half years, since I took over Broadleigh Gardens and moved it to Taunton, there has been at least one small bulb in flower on every day of the year. The importance of this similarity between the two groups of plants may have escaped you in the past, but I hope to show that the heather bed can be enhanced by the addition of a few small bulbs.

The first point to consider is that it is possible to prolong the flowering season in certain parts of the heather bed, using the out-of-flower heathers as a foil for the widely differing colours provided by a broad field of small flowering bulbs. You may be worried that the heathers will swamp the bulbs, but this is very often an asset rather than a liability. One thinks immediately of *Alliums* grown through a tight wedge of some of the *Erica carnea* varieties, giving an unexpected splash of colour in June and July. *A. neapolitanum* with heads of white lace-like flowers on 18 in. stems looks particularly stunning when grown through the dark green background of the *Ericas*. Another example is the dramatic effect given by underplanting *A. moly*, commonly called the Golden Garlic. Please don't be put off by the name; the plant only smells when the leaves or stems are bruised or picked. Another genus of bulbs in this context would be the summer-flowering *Triteleias*. These again produce small heads of masses of star-shaped flowers, in various shades of blue, or, more rarely, white. *T. hyacinthia* (24 in., white); *T. laxa* (18 in., deep blue) which looks especially fine amongst the variegated heaths, and *T. Tubergenii* (15 in., paleblue with a deeper exterior) should all be considered.

A quick look through any bulb catalogue will give you endless combinations to try, bearing in mind that the bulbs chosen for underplanting must be tidy growers and tall enough to hold their flowers above the shrubs. Unfortunately this precludes the many species and varieties of Narcissi and Tulip which look ridiculously out of place. My own choice of spring bulbs amongst the summer-flowering *Daboecia cantabrica* and *Calluna vulgaris* would be the Snakes Head Iris (*I. tuberosa*), which has very sweetly scented green flowers with a fur-like black blotch and 12 in. stem and which is outstanding against a variegated background. Against a dark background I would choose *Ornithogalum nutans*, which has 12 in. tall stems on the top third of which hang masses of silvery-white bells with a broad white stripe on the outside of the petals, giving the impression of a vivid glistening jade. But my *pièce de résistance* would be a complementary planting of *Erica carnea*, 'Winter Beauty' with the silvery lavender *Crocus tomasinianus*; this to my way of thinking is quite superb.

Although to some people the ideal heather bed consists of a solid planting of different kinds of heathers, with the interest being given by a choice of varieties having different heights, shapes, flowering times, leaf form and colour, my own preference is to have sudden pockets of different plants. I find that this is not only restful to the eye, but provides me with the ideal conditions to grow some of my favourite bulbs. Inevitably any bed must have a front edge and I would have the occasional bay cut out. If these were in full sun I would grow the true autumn crocuses (not Colchicums which are barred because of their two-foot high leaves). A sudden splash of autumn colour would be given by the yellow *Sternbergia lutea* which likes a dry, sunny position. In the spring *Scilla* 'Spring Beauty' with its dark blue bells would stand out against *Calluna vulgaris* 'Golden Feather' and the delightful *Puschkinia libanotica* with its 4 in. stems or tiny up-turned silvery-blue star-shaped flowers against *E. carnea* 'Springwood Pink'. Should the bays be shady, I would immediately think towards the winter-flowering *Cyclamen coum* with its shiny round leaves and its choice

of colours, either white, carmine or pink. In a damper spot what could look nicer than the wild English Snakes Head Fritillary, *F. Meleagris*, or the Canadian wood lily, *Trillium grandiflorum*, with its large white flowers. A sudden patch of Snowdrops looks quite stunning against a dark background on a cold February day.

Indeed the list is endless and depends entirely on personal preferences. I do hope though that, among the more specialist articles in this Year Book, I have given you food for thought and perhaps both your reading and your gardening (dare I say it?) some light relief.



A Cairngorm Rock Garden

B. H. Humble, Aviemore, Inverness-shire

In 1959 the new Scottish National Centre for Out of Door Training was built on an area of deep old heather. When the foundations for one wing was built, soil and heather was dumped at the side of it and two big boulders left, one at either end. It was decided to link these up and make a rock garden. All old soil had to be removed together with lumps of tar, cement sacking, old heather and much debris. At that time courses were mainly for school children who came up for a fortnight or a month at a time. Each group of ten had one day of public service during their stay and this included work in the garden. Flagstones were collected from all over the area and every stone and all soil had to be carted in and gradually built up into three tiers linking up the two boulders. This involved a vast amount of labour and as I had suggested the scheme and was there frequently as voluntary instructor, I was in charge of it, having myself grown heathers at my home in Dumbarton for many years. I brought up some heathers and heaths from my own garden and the staff at that time each put up cash to buy three plants from Jack

Drake's Nursery at Inshriach. It was soon apparent that groups of three were not sufficient to give a proper effect and now we have plots of six or 12 and one big one of over 30.

A French drain was dug round the edges, with a top layer of gravel and large flagstones on top of this to form a path, this alone quite a big job. It was soon apparent that many varieties from the south could not withstand the harsh conditions, for here snow may lie from December till April and fierce winds up to 60 knots often sweep the area. The prostrate *C.v.* 'County Wicklow' soon disappeared while the lovely *C.v.* 'Mrs. Pat' with its light green foliage and pink tips to the shoots died out. I remember when showing the schoolgirls round, I quoted Fred Chapple's classic description of *C.v.* 'Sister Anne' "pretty pink flowers curl at the tip as though admiring the plant as a whole, like a girl peeping through a mirror to admire her beauty". Afterwards a girl came to me saying they had a teacher called Sister Anne and could she have some of it to take to her. Alas I had to say that two Sister Annes had died on me and sheep had eaten the others! Sheep were a problem in these early days before the garden was fenced in as they could pull the whole small plants out by the root. The schoolgirls' favourite is the smallest of the Bell Heathers, *E. cinerea* 'Honeymoon', which with its mass of white flowers flushed with lavender still grows strongly.

Concentration is now on the foliage heathers which give colour and beauty at all times of the year while the harsh climate seems to make the Winter colouring much more vivid. *C.v.* 'Cuprea' is specially fine and almost glows as it catches the lingering rays of the sun in winter afternoons. The largest bed is of that best ground coverer, *C.v.* Aurea with its long feathery stems, gold in summer and rusty red in winter. The circular bed of over 40 plants can be seen from a long distance away. Pride of place must however go to '*C.v.* Robert Chapman', a more recent introduction to the garden and which has grown very vigorously. With its long stems it is also one of the most suitable for layering. *C.v.* 'Beoley Gold' has done well but *C.v.* 'Serlei Aurea' has not proved so good. Of the other

Callunas we have the whites 'August Beauty' and 'Drum-Ra' though I hope to introduce 'White Gown' which would seem to be the latest flowering (in my own garden it is still in bloom as I write in late October).

The only other Bell Heathers we have are *E. cin.* 'Hookstone White' and *E. cin.* 'Cevennes' each of which give masses of bloom every year. Of course we have beds of the winter-flowering heaths, the hardiest of all plants. In late February I have dug through two feet of hard snow and found 'Springwood White' in full bloom below. The contrast between this and adjoining bed of *E. carnea* 'Vivellii' with its dark green foliage and carmine red flowers is very noticeable. Other carneas are 'Rosy Gem' and 'White Glow', but neither give the mass of flowers as 'Springwood White'. For many years we had a fine bed of the *Erica x darleyensis* 'Silberschmelze' but with the long dry cold windy spell last Winter it seemed to die out and was dug up.

Cuttings have been taken almost every year and there did not appear to be much difference whether root hormones were used or not. With no greenhouse, no heating, no frames, these were just left outside in boxes. Though often covered with snow for many months, ten to twenty per cent survived and surely these strains must be the hardiest of all.

Alas some soil brought in from Rothiemurchus included sheep's sorrel, the worst weed on earth with its long underground runners. Though dug up twice a year it still seems to invade most plots. Lime of course would eradicate, but one can't use lime with the heathers while varied weed killers have had no effect. Any advice as how to deal with this problem would be welcome. Finally the garden is about eight miles east of Aviemore and half a mile beyond Glenmore Campsite and members are welcome to visit it at any time.



Tea at Champs Hill

A. J. Stow, Flackwell Heath, Bucks.

It is not everyone who will invite a party of forty people to their garden and then serve afternoon tea, but that was exactly what our Chairman and his wife did on August 3rd last year when the Dutch Heather Society, who were on a whirlwind tour of gardens in Southern England accepted the kind invitation and duly turned up in their coach.

After a stroll round this very extensive garden and a visit to Mrs. Bowerman's very professional propagation unit, afternoon tea was served with the help of the Council members and their wives who were present. The language barrier was practically non-existent as our Dutch visitors nearly all spoke English, how lazy we British are with regard to languages.

After tea and much shaking of hands our Dutch friends boarded their coach to return to their hotel, no doubt thinking as I did that with their garden, the Chairman and his wife have the best of both worlds, a cultivated heather garden plus a vast stand of natural heather.

On speaking to Mr. Bowerman later however, he pointed out that the local deer did not know the difference between natural heather and the cultivated varieties, or newly planted conifers, so they have their problems at Champs Hill.

I enjoyed the visit as I am sure the other visitors did, to me this is what the Heather Society is all about, visiting other members in their gardens, whether large or small.



Daboecia 'Jack Drake'

D. McClintock, Platt, Kent

It is, I think, well-known that the first, presumably, hybrid *Daboecias* to be propagated were the prosaically-labelled Nos. 1, 2 and 3, and that their propagation was

the work of Jack Drake at Inshriach. The original seedlings had come from the late Mr. William Buchanan of Bearsden, and happy memory, in the late 1950's.

No. 2 was ditched after a while (but I would much like to see it, if anyone has it). Nos. 1 and 3 were sent to the R.H.S. in 1968 and Mr. Drake asked that whichever might get an award should be called 'William Buchanan'. In the event, No. 1 was preferred and is now indeed 'William Buchanan'. Mr. Drake in his catalogues distinguishes the two in that No. 3 "forms neat little bushes covered with garnet-red bells. 12 cm.", while No. 1 "forms a large bush covered with large drop-like flowers of rich crimson. 30 cm."

But No. 3 is still just 'No. 3' and needs a good name. What better some of us thought than that of its propagator and first distributor, and lover of heathers? So he was approached, and I cannot do better than quote, with his permission, his letter:-

"I certainly agree with you that No. 3 should have a name now that it has proved itself to be a good garden plant. It is not so strong a grower as 'William Buchanan', nor is it quite so hardy here, where a severe bout of weather, especially if followed by wet snow which freezes, can give it a nasty bash. But it usually recovers again from the base.

My first reaction to your suggestion to call it 'Jack Drake' was "no" as I had nothing whatever to do with the raising of it. On the other hand it would never have appeared in cultivation if Willie hadn't dug up a handful of seedlings for me. They would have been weeded up and lost. One wonders how many other fine hybrids were lost in that way!

So I suppose I did have a hand in its introduction and therefore agree to it being called 'Jack Drake', so long as it is made clear that I was not its raiser".

At which all gardeners will be delighted.



Judging of Heathers

T. Underhill, Totnes, Devon

In 1963 the popularity of Heaths and Heathers resulted in the formation of the Heather Society which has helped guide and intensify interest in this group of Ericaceous plants. It was not surprising that, after a short time, the Royal Horticultural Society would include competition classes for Heaths and Heathers from the open at some of their shows in London.

I have been fortunate to have been one of the judges on several occasions. My personal feelings are ones of appreciation to the R.H.S. for including Heaths and Heathers in their shows; appreciation also to those who have entered in the competitions but also one of sorrow when I see people going to great lengths to carry their plants and materials to the Hall, exhibit them, and then spoil things by showing that they have never read the R.H.S.'s Horticultural Show Handbook or given a moment's serious thought to presentation, let alone study the schedule. Always read schedules carefully, fill in the forms carefully and then send in the entry well in advance of the show.

Whilst winning is very good, it should not deter from the honour of competing in a strongly contested class and if you are not happy with the result do not say you will not compete again but try and find the reasoning behind what has been the judges' carefully made decision. Never allow your curiosity to get you in the way when judging is taking place.

Having noted which classes you are entering, read the schedule again, carefully noting whether it is a single plant or vases asked for, single or double flowered, coloured or white cultivar, foliage only, etc. As yet there is not a recommended system of the merits of Heaths and Heathers as there is for fruit and vegetables and many pot plants. It is advisable, though not essential, to have all material clearly and carefully labelled. It could be the deciding factor if two exhibits are equal in everything else. Labelling does add further interest to the show.

All exhibits should be in good condition, i.e. when the material is in its most perfect stage of possible beauty. It should be fresh so, with cut flowers, keep the period between cutting and showing as short as possible and pack the material carefully in a cool, slightly moist container. Take particular care that it is handled carefully – distorted flower spikes, bent or broken foliage are all detrimental. Material should be free from such mechanical damage as well as that from weather, pests and diseases. Soil splash on the underneath of foliage and on the lower flowers is a common fault, so is dead or anaemic foliage. Flowering plants or stems should be at their peak, maximum number of flowers open – minimum amount of dead flowers, stamens fully ripe. Remember the judges judge in the early morning of a show and they cannot presume that in an hour's time your flower buds will open. This is a point often not taken into account when visitors criticise some of the judging.

When more than one exhibit is required in a class such as so many spikes to a vase full they should be alike in age, size and form. It is important that the material should be true to type and not contain any variations unless this is a characteristic of the cultivar. Rarity does not usually come into the judging unless everything else is equal, although judges will appreciate the good material of a plant that is difficult to grow. Plants should be sturdy and shapely and be growing in a container that is not too large. This is an exhibition of plant material, not pots or giant polythene bags.

Lack of presentation is the most common fault. Pots and containers are often dirty, polythene bags tied round the ball of root with old string, a rough knot made and long tails of the knot left hanging. Leaves of deciduous trees, grass and weeds are often seen in the plant as well as soil from rain splash or peat when the plant has been potted probably matters of hours earlier. Labelling when used, is often of a poor standard. A torn scrap of paper or a dirty label, is not unusual.

The R.H.S. states that it will provide earthenware vases between 6 ins. and 9 ins. in height and no others may be

used and although the judges are asked to take into account the quality of each specimen exhibited regardless of its size, whether a vase or plant, their judging is very much affected when they see a bunch of 6 in. long stems of a plant just dropped into the neck of a 6 in. vase. A little block of oasis or similar material into which the stems can be pushed into a nice arrangement so the judges can see the beauty and quality of each specimen is preferred.

Where a specimen is required for foliage effect, then remember it is clean, unblemished, healthy foliage that is asked for. Remember that it is almost certain to be judged on its decorative value. There is no need to move other people's specimens to put yours in a prominent space. Good judges backed by competent stewards, will not miss any specimens and the judges are almost certain, in making their final choice, to pick up and examine thoroughly both underneath and all round the specimen whether it be a plant or a vase.



Heather Gardens: No. 1 ***Around London***

Major General P. G. Turpin, Guildford, Surrey

Those who live in London or the Home Counties are very fortunate in the number and variety of heather gardens which are within easy reach, where nearly all the varieties of hardy heaths and heathers may be seen growing in ideal conditions.

In the greater London area the Heath Garden in Kew Gardens, the heather beds in Syon Park, in the Waterhouse and New Plantations in Bushy Park and in the Isabella Plantation in Richmond Park are perhaps the best known collections. There are smaller plantings in the garden of Pembroke Lodge in Richmond Park, and in Queen Mary's Gardens in Regents Park and there are a few heathers in the Chelsea Physic Garden,

including plants of *E. x Veitchii*. There was a very fine display of heathers from Regents Park at the Royal Horticultural Society's Show on 6-7 August 1974, including a particularly good selection of *E. cinerea*.

An increased use of heathers is being made in our public gardens as superintendents and head-gardeners appreciate the great value of heather plantings in providing all the year round colour in flowers and foliage.

Further afield the Royal Horticultural Society's Gardens at Wisley and the Heather Garden in Windsor Great Park offer two of the best displays of heathers that can be found in cultivation anywhere.

The County of Surrey probably contains more nurseries that specialise in heathers of all sorts than any comparable area in the British Isles. The heather enthusiast can see almost any heather he fancies at all stages of growth and can make his selections in the full knowledge of the space and conditions that any species or cultivar is likely to need in his garden. In some of these nurseries the heathers make a wonderful display and the effect of different combinations can be fully studied and appreciated. Surrey owes its good fortune in this respect to the fact that so much of the county is natural heathland. William Cobbett, in "Rural Rides", looking at it through a farmer's eyes, describes it as follows: "this is a sort of country having less to please the eye than any other that I have ever seen, always save and except the heaths like those of Bagshot and Hindhead, a rascally common covered with poor heath, and went about six miles over a heath, even worse than Bagshot Heath; as barren as it is possible for land to be." But he was willing to accept that heather was a saving grace. . . . "for the Bagshot country, and the commons between Farnham and Haslemere have heath at any rate." Many of the names of cultivated heathers remind us of the Surrey commons where they were originally collected.

There is a private garden, not far from Farnham, on natural heathland where more than fifty different heathers were planted about twelve years ago and have been allowed to seed themselves freely. The result has

been an almost embarrassing profusion of seedlings of an astonishing variety. The seedlings far outnumber the original plants.

Finally there are the National Trust properties, such as Nymans, Sheffield Park and Wakehurst, and other gardens open to the public, like Feathercombe, Eric Parker's old home, where heathers are grown either on their own or in combination with other ericaceous plants.

All these gardens are within easy reach of London and provide a marvellous living reference library for all those who are interested in growing or merely appreciating heathers.

In subsequent notes I propose to describe in greater detail some of the heather gardens which have been mentioned above.



Book Reviews

THE PEAT GARDEN AND ITS PLANTS by ALFRED

EVANS. *J. M. Dent and Sons*. 164 pp. 51 photos in colour, 71 in B. and W. £6.50.

Have no doubt about it, this is a first-class book. One of its lesser merits is to remind some people that plants other than heathers grow on peat. Only a score or so of them are mentioned here, while there are 5-600 other plants included. Not that Ericologists might not pick holes with their good friend the author – e.g. “500 or thereby” species of *Erica*, whereas there are well over 600; *E. ciliaris* “prominently glandular” – it can be entirely eglandular; *E. “mediterranea”* wild in some bays in Counties Galway and Mayo” – in fact none in Galway at all and very much also inland in Mayo. And are its dwarf forms the most hardy? My 11 foot ‘Superba’ has yet to turn a hair at any frost after 25 years. Nor is it so that “invariably the plants grown (as *Daboecia azorica*) are hybrids”, although doubtless many are. But these are trivialities beside the rich fund of knowledge displayed throughout. It would be grossly misleading to give the impression that this was not a remarkable

display of a high level of plantsmanship, which a real peat garden demands, and fosters. Other slips there are, but it seems impossible to get a book thus faultless. Instead one's head reeled with admirable ideas and tips and first-hand information as one read through. It is all most impressive. He knows, loves and describes well – "*Smilacina racemosa* has a proud erect habit" "*Uvularia grandiflora* always appears to be suffering from drought" – why had one never thought of that analogy?, and so on. His "criteria are interest, colour and form, of which interest must be given a great deal of priority" – there speaks the true plantsman, and indeed throughout this his worthy work.

DAVID MCCLINTOCK

HEATHERS IN COLOUR. by BRIAN and VALERIE PROUDLEY. 192pp. *Blandford Press*. £1.90.

Here at last is the complete guide to the growing of heathers – how, where and why to grow them, with even a kindly word thrown to the flower arrangers! The book is embellished with no less than 141 coloured illustrations – far in excess of any previous publication. What an excellent idea to show individual cultivars in close-up and then a group of the same plants in the garden! It is a little disappointing that some of these pictures are too dark, no doubt a fault in the reproduction.

The book is very much down to earth in every sense of the term. Not only is advice given on suiting the heathers to the soil but also how to overcome unsuitable soil conditions and so suit the soil to the heathers. Apart from extreme boggy conditions and more or less solid chalk (where amelioration of the soil would be a long and expensive process) any soil can be made to suit most heathers and it is obvious that the writers of this book have had wide experience in this field. In my own case, gardening on heavy clay, I find that by mixing peat in the top 2 or 3 inches of soil, and planting open

ground rooted cuttings I achieve a much greater measure of success than with larger plants from pots. The roots do not seem to adventure out into the (modified) clay in the latter case. I also question the advice (on a clay soil) of digging a hole for the larger plants or tree heathers and partly filling this with a good compost. Such a hole would become a sump in wet weather.

The various methods of increasing heathers, by cuttings, division, layering, etc. are described in detail, and if these instructions are carefully followed, even a beginner should achieve a gratifying measure of success. This book is designed for the beginner, and anyone new to heathers, having read it, should be able to produce a colourful garden in a comparatively short space of time. The more expert grower will no doubt be interested in the descriptions of new varieties some of which are coming on the market now and others are promised for the near future. I think this list would be improved by the addition of any R.H.S. awards that the plants have received.

The authors have indicated which of the listed varieties they consider outstanding and if a newcomer to heathers were to grow only these varieties (assuming that his ground was large enough) he would certainly acquire a garden which would be the envy of his friends. Naturally many favourite varieties are not so honoured and each grower would probably have a recommended list that would differ from the Proudleys. Varieties differ in their behaviour in different parts of the country and on different soils, and the beginner should try other cultivars if he is unsuccessful with the recommended ones.

In the advice on the trimming of heathers it may be found that because of the large number of plants, trimming becomes a burden if concentrated at one time of the year. In my own case, I trim the *Callunas* and *Tetralix* cultivars in the autumn and leave the others until the spring, thus spreading the load.

I found the section on pronunciation most interesting. This is a favourite hobby horse of mine and I firmly plump for the 'English' pronunciation of Latin (and Greek) gardening terms. After all, most of these names were

given when the 'English' pronunciation was the accepted one and I see no reason for change.

To sum up, this is a very worthwhile book, and the thanks of all heather enthusiasts are due to Mr. and Mrs. Proudley.

H. MORTON SCANTLIN

HET HEIDETUINBOEK, by HARRY VAN DE LAAR.

160 pp. *Zomer and Keuning, Wageningen*. 1974. Dutch Guilders 19.90.

The heather world is fortunate in having two such excellent, handy and inexpensive books as this one and the Proudleys' "Heathers in Colour" appear within a month or so of each other; and not only the heather world. Both are admirable to tempt those who have not yet realised the varied beauties and delights of heathers.

That this one is written in Dutch is admittedly a drawback, but a smattering of German helps. In any event, the scientific and cultivar names are international, and so are the 54 fine photographs, 36 of them in colour, good colour too. Some will show us varieties we may not know, such as *Erica tetralix* 'Ardy' or 'Helma'. There are 14 useful line drawings too by the gifted author, and four garden layouts.

The book deals with all the essentials of planting, propagation, cultivation, naming and labelling, as well as with varieties, with a chart of their flowering times, and with companion plants. To say that Mr. van de Laar with his long experience at Boskoop and many publications is well qualified for this is the understatement of the year; and sure reliance may be placed on what he has written. This is a source of importance, as well as an excellent practical guide. Its particular extra value to us is the fresh ideas we can get from the rich Dutch experience.

Distribution maps of the main species are included. These are always very difficult and time-consuming to get accurate, and some of them need modification – *Erica erigena* for example reaches right to the south

of Spain. But such maps are most useful and much needed for our heathers. Any comments on those here, or elsewhere, are to be welcomed. They show what species we are likely to encounter in different areas on our travels.

I do not think the job generally could have been done better than in these two recent neat and attractive publications, which complement each other remarkably. Members should possess both.

DAVID MCCLINTOCK



For The Love of Heather

Mrs. Gerda Chatelain, Orpington, Kent

As I sit in our garden in the September sunshine, I cannot resist attempting an article for the Year Book.

It all started some five years ago when my husband planted our first heather, a 'Silberschmelze'. We liked this winter bloomer so much that we decided to plant more. From that time it snowballed and the hunt for different species and varieties in our local nurseries was really on. As we only possess a small suburban garden, drifts of three or at most five plants were our limit but with the addition of singletons and the exercise of some ingenuity we have collected over 100 different cultivars.

I not only dearly love heathers but I am now crazy about them and will travel any distance to visit a new nursery. After a memorable visit to Tabramhill Gardens I could not of course resist buying from Mr. Yates' almost inexhaustible selection. Where to put the additions was a problem and one evening my husband returned home to find that the front lawn had disappeared – no easy task considering that it had been in place for 40 years.

Always in search of starred gardens to visit, I make the Year Book my constant companion and on holiday in North Wales this year we had the great pleasure of meeting Mr. and Mrs. Haig and Mr. and Mrs. Chattaway. The time spent admiring their gardens and enjoying their hospitality was the highlight of our holiday. We only wish that more members would open their gardens, however small these may be. After all, much as we enjoy visiting delightful large gardens like Great Comp, we should dearly like to meet other small gardeners and discuss mutual problems and experiences. Our garden, such as it is, is open at any time to members of the Society.

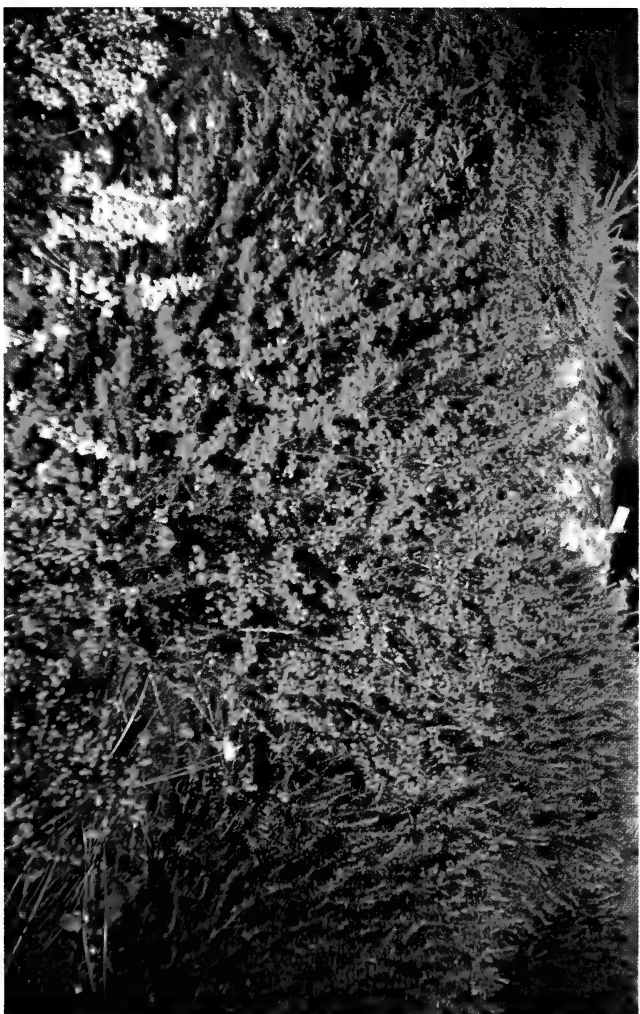
If the Editor will allow me a little more space, it may be of interest if I mention some of the cultivars I have found particularly attractive. At the time of writing, late September, *C.v* 'Finale' is putting on a fine show when most of the other Callunas are past their peak. 'Elsie Purnell', 'H. E. Beale' and 'Peter Sparkes' are too well known to need any recommendation from me but 'Mrs. Pat' with its lovely pink-tipped foliage should be a must, as should *E. erigena* 'Irish Salmon' which for some reason starts to bloom with us in September. When the last of our herbaceous beds was conscripted into heather production, I made a border of *E. cinerea* 'C. D. Eason' which from the description in the books I hoped would give a splash of colour throughout the summer. I now wish I had planted 'Atrosanguinea Smith's Variety' which is an absolute marvel with us producing an unbroken succession of flowers which even now show no sign of finishing.

Autumn is upon us and for most gardeners the season is ending, but for us heather fanatics a new cycle is beginning with the winter bloomers heavy with bud and an incomparable mass of colour about to enliven the dull winter months. I for one will never lose my love for heathers.



Calluna Vulgaris

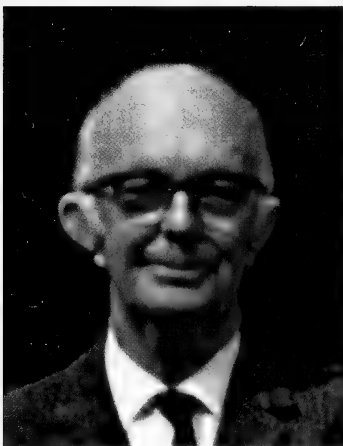
‘County Wicklow’



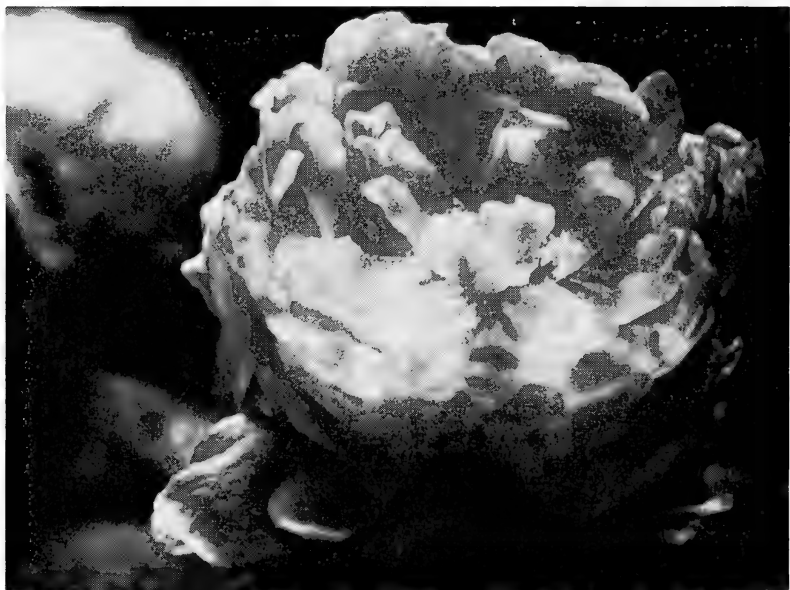
ERICA CINEREA (P. S. PATRICK)



P. S. PATRICK



P. S. PATRICK



Calluna Vulgaris

'County Wicklow'

Heathers and the Camera

Peter Connelly, Paisley, Renfrewshire

Photographing heathers is like photographing people, each has its own personality and individuality, and it is to this end that one should focus the camera. By all means take the record shot showing *Calluna vulgaris* sweeping up the hillside and down the glen, but what about looking closely and discovering the beauty of a single spike, or even more closely at the wonderful soft milky-rose cluster of the flower of 'County Wicklow', that's where you see the beauty of this choice double.

There are various ways of achieving close-up photographs and since the simplest cameras, and that's what we will talk about, focus at about 3 ft., you need to add something to the lens of the camera to change the focal length, which allows you to go closer to the object being photographed and therefore gives you a bigger picture of the 'County Wicklow' flower. The first of these aids, and this can be bought at your local photographers for something round about a pound, is a Supplementary Lens. This is similar to a spectacle lens in a mount and fits over the existing lens of your camera, whether it be a baby Brownie, Instamatic or whatever you have. These come in +1, +2 or +3 diopters, and your local photographic dealer will be pleased to advise you on the fitting and even the use of whichever strength of these lenses you desire. With this lens comes a leaflet giving distances at which the camera should be placed to keep everything in focus and enlarge the beauties of nature. With the lens in place all you need now is select your spike, well away from the wind, or stuck into a piece of plasticine in a quiet corner, place the camera on a tripod, measure from camera lens to spike and very carefully press the release button. If using a fixed focus lens camera you have the advantage of the aperture being fixed at something around f8, but if using a variable aperture lens which can be altered from say f2.8 to f16, then the smaller the hole which lets the lights in the sharper the

picture, depending, of course, on the available light – so good sunny days for this job. The supplementary or close-up lens is a simple, efficient, compact and inexpensive way of taking close-up photographs.

If you desire an ever closer look at the details, then this can be achieved with the aid of tubes or bellows which take you into the realms of micro-photography and for this the photographer must have a camera with interchangeable lenses. Tubes can cost as little as four pounds and are relatively easy to use, once again full instructions coming with the tubes. All one has to do with tubes is to remove the lens from the camera and insert the tube between camera and lens. The tubes are usually in three parts, one screwed into the other, and the longer you make the tube, the greater the magnification on the film. For this set-up you may need stronger light but even an angle-poise placed close to the flower head will enable a picture to be taken. To really get close and allow you to stopdown your aperture to f16, thus increasing the depth of field – in other words making sure everything in the picture is sharp – you could really do with flash.

If you become as keen as this, then I would advise reading-up on it for yourself. I am merely suggesting the methods available to help you to get a closer look at the beauties in the details of heathers and heaths. Once you understand the basic mechanics, and the simplicity of fitting a supplementary lens for instance, there is nothing complicated about close-up photography. The supplementary lens does not alter the exposure at which the shot should be taken, just make sure the distance from camera to object is correct. On the other hand, tubes increase the exposure time and this must be calculated as per the instruction leaflet supplied. There is nothing difficult about taking close-up pictures and the effort is well rewarded, especially in colour, when you see the intricacies of these wonderful rosettes. Why not add them to your collection of gardens visited and heathers seen.



Reports from Local Groups

NORTHERN GROUP

"We consider that to make the Heather Society a real live force it is essential to work out a zoning system, and to establish branches in these zones, each with its own Secretary who will coordinate the work and interests of those who otherwise may feel cut off from the parent body".

The above quotation is from the Society's Circular No. 3 of August 1963, when membership all told was under 200. By 1966 membership had passed the 400 mark and it was in that year an inter-group activity was first mooted in the North where membership was small and very scattered. It appeared doubtful whether any gathering would be significant in view of the long distance travelling required between North, Midlands and Wales.

But all doubts receded when the invitations circularised in 1967 brought a response quite beyond expectations and the result was three meetings, alternating between Harlow Car and Ness, attended by fifty or so members on each occasion. This has become almost a routine activity each year, coupled with support of the Heather Garden and Trials at Harlow Car. By contributing our surplus plants for sale to one another, and by members donations we covered our financial overheads and also financed the Trials, which alone called for over £100. Apart from zonal activities, groups more local are now arising, the 'Pioneers' being our members in Huddersfield. They gather together informally, talk Heathers, and of course, use the Slide Library.

Similarly, the Sheffield group is formed, and in September, they put on display a Heather Exhibit at the Sheffield Botanical Gardens. A member gave a 20 minute talk on 'Heathers for your Garden' (which was broadcast on Radio Sheffield). This was followed by a lecture at the Library Theatre which was well attended by the Public. So we warmly recommend the formation of Groups,

however small, they have a capacity to grow, because, as a newish member said, "this is the friendliest Society I have ever encountered".

Our thanks to Mr. J. P. Ardron for this report, who modestly declined to mention that he himself broadcast on Radio Sheffield.

WEST OF SCOTLAND GROUP

At the moment our usual programme consists of three evening meetings held at two-monthly intervals during the winter. Last season's syllabus included illustrated talks on Plant Photography, Garden Construction, and Conifers in the Garden.

One or more garden visits are arranged for the summer months. This year we visited the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. Many informal visits to members' gardens take place all the year round. Cuttings and plants of heathers and other things are exchanged.

This summer we were pleased to be able to help with the arrangements for the Stirling conference. At the time of writing (November 1974) we have already started on a new and interesting programme of winter meetings, and look forward to seeing many more local members join us at these.

E.M.B.

A REPORT FROM THE MIDLANDS

Much of the pleasure of being a member of a Society such as ours lies in the opportunities for meeting other members and sharing experiences. This has been amply proved by the success of the visits and meetings recently arranged in the Midlands. In July 1973 my wife and I were persuaded to approach members living in the Birmingham area whose names and addresses we took from the Year Book. We wrote inviting them to a meeting in our small garden and the 11 members and 8 friends who came were so enthusiastic that there have now been visits to the gardens of five other members within a period of just over twelve months. Attendance ranged between 25 and 40 and we had about the same numbers at three evening meetings held in central Birmingham.

Originally we defrayed the cost of circulars and postages by taking a collection at each meeting but we are now making our fixtures well in advance and relying entirely on notices in the Bulletins. This makes organisation very simple as all we have to do is to decide when we meet on the arrangements for the next one or two meetings.

We are hoping that any member who feels the urge to open his or her garden to members on a specified day, whether or not he or she has been to one of our gatherings, will get in touch so that we can co-ordinate dates and send them to the Secretary on one list for the whole of the Midlands for inclusion in the Diary of Events. This particularly applies to members in the remoter areas where perhaps a smaller attendance would be expected but the contacts made could be no less rewarding.

HAROLD STREET

NORFOLK GROUP DIARY OF 1974

15th March. 23 attended Group Meeting including 2 visitors who later joined the Society. Distributed selected heather seedlings for trial, and Mr. C. R. Lawrence showed some of his collection of Cape Heaths.

19/20 April. Put on Display of Heathers at Norfolk and Norwich Spring Show as reported in Bulletin Vol. 2, No. 2. Chatting to interested viewers gained us prospective members and gardens to visit.

4th June. 3 members visited garden of Mr. Shreeve, Hoveton and recommend it for a future visit.

20th June. 17 members, plus 3 visitors attended Group Meeting. Gave talk on propagation. Took 20 *Calluna* and 18 selected *cinerea* seedlings for trial. Members volunteered 2½p each for them to supplement funds.

28th June. 7 members visited garden of Mr. Pointer, Blofield, on a very wet evening, but found it well worth braving the rain. Reminiscing over refreshments later made it almost like a family gathering until I felt I had to break it up with a vote of thanks at 9 p.m.

25th July. Visited Mr. Peter Boardman's 3 acre garden

at How Hill Farm, Ludham. See report in Bulletin Vol. 2. No. 3.

15th September. 8 members visited Kelling Heath between Holt and Sheringham. Found some interesting foliage varieties, as well as white *Calluna* and *cinerea*.

19th September. 24 including 5 visitors attended Group Meeting. 48 sub-standard heather plants salvaged by kind permission of Mr. N. Brummage sold like hot cakes and defrayed expenses. Slides were shown of the Dartington and Stirling conferences and also some fine close up shots of winter flowering heaths lent by Mrs. W. Hurst.

20th September. Regretfully had to cancel putting on a Display of Heathers at Diss Horticultural Show 21/22nd due to my wife being suddenly taken ill.

29th September. 10 including 2 visitors from Leicester visited my own, Mr. J. Marshall's, Mr. S. Burton's, and Mr. H. Fulcher's gardens. At the latter, besides being treated to welcome refreshments we had the pleasure of viewing his collection of rocks, fossils, and semi-precious stones.

B. G. LONDON

SOUTH WEST

Mr. A. W. Jones of West Camel, Somerset will be most interested in hearing from his local members as he is in the process of forming a group in this area.

THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

This is the first opportunity for the Chairman of Committees to report to the membership and I should like to commence by thanking my fellow Committee members for their work since our inception.

Each meeting of the Technical Committee sees a widening of the range of subjects coming into its orbit.

The Committee has commenced the extension of the Society's trials at Harlow Car into other parts of the country, to increase the coverage of climate and soils in which the behaviour of heathers can be assessed. *Calluna* plants, propagated from Harlow Car stock, have been distributed to members as far apart as Ren-

frewshire and Kent. It is hoped that *Erica carnea* will be dealt with during this year. If you would like to participate in these "Member's Trials" you should contact your Group Convenor, who has been given details. Certain botanical gardens, including some attached to universities, are being invited to take part in these extended trials.

The Committee has been approached on a variety of matters, including pesticides, labelling, pH of soils and recommendations for heather planting in a major arboretum.

It is expected that the Application Form for the Registration of the Name of a Heather will be available soon.

Work has commenced on a "Preferred List" of heathers. The aim is to provide guidance for those wishing or forced by space to grow a limited selection. Initially the document will be based mainly on the results of the Harlow Car trials. It will be revised in the light of the Member's Trials and other data. It is of interest to note that professional opinion is much in favour of this idea.

A.T.



Letters to the Editor

19 Park Avenue,
Chapelton,
Sheffield S30 4WH

Dear Sir,

I was interested to read the article on the St. Kilda Heathers, although I was rather surprised that you did not inform members that the collection of ten heathers is obtainable from Colonel Stitt of Blairgowrie. I obtained two of these, a white and a pink, a year ago and they are flourishing. I notice also that the Tabramhill list also refers those interested to Col. Stitt.

I think it should also be noted that similar prostrate or miniaturised forms of heather seem to occur on west facing steep slopes in many locations of the Atlantic seaboard of Scotland. I remember being fascinated by

the dwarfed flora of various kinds near Duntulm Castle at the north end of Skye. I took one or two specimens but they died on the journey home. More recently, however, I have carried round a polythene bag with moist peat in it and I now have two specimens growing on in the garden which had their origin on the steep windswept slope above the Lighthouse at the south end of the Mull of Kintyre – one in fact is a golden dwarf *Calluna* which turns chocolate brown in winter and the other is a pygmy *tetralix* which was only about two inches high in its natural setting. I am interested to see how they grow in a different environment.

It is interesting to transplant unusual types of heather and see the way some change but others don't. The natural colour of the *Calluna* from the Mull of Kintyre is a rose pink; the *Cinerea* tends to a dark ruby. On transplanting into my soil the *Calluna* goes more normal purplish pink but the *cinerea* retains its attractive colour. There is a bank of grey *Calluna* near Hutton le Hole – the whole effect is one of cool dustiness. When transplanted only one plant in every so many retains its greyness. There is a twisted "tomentosa" form growing near Castleton in North Yorkshire; on cultivation it gets more bushy and less twisted – this again comes from a windswept slope.

K. C. BARRACLOUGH

Ffynnon Deilo,
Pendoylan,
Cowbridge,
Glam. CF7 7UJ

Dear Sir,

I see in the Bulletin Vol. 2 No. 2 that you propose to repeat the theme on propagation in the next Year Book.

In "The English Heather Garden" it states on page 39 "*Erica carnea* . . . should have cuttings taken in June and July cuttings of all other kinds are better taken in August".

I should be interested to read other opinions on the best time to take cuttings from different cultivars.

R. J. H. LLOYD

Having always gardened on an alkaline soil I am always looking around for ideas on increasing acidity, apart from the copious use of peat, and one way is to treat the soil with one part of Phosphoric Acid to twenty parts of water. This was recommended to me by a works chemist of my acquaintance and when watering it on the soil one could see chalk particles dissolving accompanied by a hissing sound.

I was interested in knowing exactly what this treatment did to the soil and knowing that two members of the technical committee had moved residence this year to gardens with alkaline soil, I wrote to the secretary Mr. David Small and members might be interested in his reply.

EDITOR

The Poplars,
All Saints Road,
Creting St. Mary,
Ipswich,
Suffolk IP6 8PJ

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your letter of the 2nd October.

I am very interested in methods of acidifying soil as I now have a pH of 8.0 (very alkaline).

When you add phosphoric acid (H_3PO_4) on calcium carbonate CaCO_3 (chalk) a fairly complicated situation can arise.

The first reaction is:-



$\text{Ca}_3(\text{PO}_4)_2$ is bone ash which is only slightly soluble in water. When you said your chalk dissolved, I suspect that the $\text{Ca}_3(\text{PO}_4)_2$ produced was very fine and seeped into the soil. H_2CO_3 breaks up into water and carbon dioxide.

Now under certain conditions of which I am not sure, particularly in soil reactions, a second reaction can occur.



$\text{Ca}(\text{H}_2\text{PO}_4)_2$ is calcium superphosphate, which is slightly acidic. It is also a fertiliser.

As far as I can see, adding phosphoric acid to soil should not make much difference to the pH, therefore, the only benefit that may ensue is that of fertilising the ground and there are far safer ways of doing this. Phosphoric acid is quite reactive and it is difficult to say what else it attacks in the soil.

I am writing to Terry Underhill who is, as you know, a corresponding member of the Technical Committee, to see if he can advise any treatments other than the conventional peat.

D. J. SMALL



Some random thoughts on Rooting Cuttings

A. W. Jones, West Camel, Somerset

My wife and I became interested in heathers in the summer of 1967. At that time I read Fred Chapple's book "The Heather Garden" (Collingridge), but it was from John Letts' beautiful garden at Windlesham that we finally contracted incurable Ericaphilia. In the autumn of that year we began to grow heathers in our tiny garden at Taplow, and in November, 1969, we joined the Heather Society. Ericaphilia proceeded apace and by the following June I was trying to root cuttings.

Those first attempts resulted in some spectacular failures, but there were enough successes to ensure that I would persist in trying to propagate heaths and heathers from cuttings. It was however necessary to find out why there had been so many failures.

In October of 1970, in reply to a cry for help, I received a letter from Mrs. Macleod. That letter was full of encouragement and in a subtle way pointed out how I might help myself towards success. I hope Mrs. Macleod will not object if I reproduce a part of it here. "I read somewhere, and wish I had taken note of it, that the critical time for success with various kinds can be as

little as six days. That is to say, if one is lucky enough to take them at the right time they will 'take', so this explains why success or failure seems inexplicable."

I felt I must test the truth of that assertion that a short critical period for success existed and, if this proved to be the case, find out when it was.

It may have been possible to do what I wanted by taking batches of cuttings from a single cultivar at intervals of two or three days over a period of several months.

However there were several drawbacks to this method. A large number of identical plants of one cultivar would be required, it would tie up the greater part of the equipment I had available for taking cuttings and it would make too great a demand on my available space and time. Furthermore if I had succeeded in identifying a critical period by this method, it may have been valid only for the cultivar I chose to study, and for the year in which I studied it. Alternatively if I worked with a reasonable number of cultivars over a number of years, the effect of various factors influencing success would probably tend to even out as I amassed data, and I would obtain a broad general picture of the best time to take my cuttings. I would also, incidentally obtain the plants I needed for the garden. I began to make records of my attempts at rooting cuttings. I decided to concentrate on cultivars of *Erica carnea* and *Erica x darleyensis*. The information I recorded was the name of the cultivar, the number of cuttings taken, and the number of cuttings which rooted and the date on which they were potted on. Where necessary I also made notes of subjective observations such as the condition of the cutting material or the state of rooting of the little plants.

I take my cuttings into flower-pots. The rooting medium is silver sand. I stand the pots on the ground in a shady position in the open air and cover them with plastic propagating domes.

I know that the number of cuttings I have taken pales into insignificance when compared to the number taken by members of the Society, but I now have records of 145 completed batches containing 7,500 individual

cuttings of *Erica carnea* and *Erica x darleyensis* cultivars. There are a further 1,800 cuttings in 26 batches at present awaiting potting on. I have taken cuttings as early as the 12th April and as late as the 17th July. This represents a reasonable amount of work and I felt that the time had come to examine my records.

Let me say at once that I do not have an answer to the question I set out with, but I do now have some new questions! It may however be of some interest if I set down some of the things I have noticed while I have been keeping records and perhaps some more knowledgeable members could supply answers to some of the questions which have been raised.

I have found that cuttings of some cultivars are ready for transplanting in as little as fifty days, and most are rooted by the autumn of the year in which they were taken. It is possible that some over-winter in the cutting pots before rooting in the following spring. My results show little or no difference in success rates between cuttings transplanted the year they were taken and those that remained in the cutting pots until the following spring. There is however, a practical point here. If well rooted cuttings are left too long in the cutting pots it will be more difficult to separate the fine roots without damage during transplantation. I am led to wonder why different cultivars of the same species should take such different times to root.

Cuttings normally root from close to the point where they were separated from the parent plant. In a few cases I have seen rooting occur, in both *Erica carnea* and *Erica x darleyensis*, from the point where the cuttings met the surface of the silver sand. These cuttings almost certainly took a long time to root. It is probable that the cutting material was too ripe and the fine new roots could not rapidly penetrate the hard surface skin in the normal areas. The skin may however have been mechanically damaged by the sand at the surface as a result of slight movement thus allowing fine roots to form at that point. Engineering theory suggests that the highest stresses induced by bending of the cuttings will occur in the surface skin at the point where it enters

the sand. Surface roots seem to break more easily during transplanting than normal roots.

I have noticed that cuttings sometimes root in well defined areas in a cutting pot while failing in the remainder of the pot. I have a few tentative explanations of why this happens but I will not go into them here. I would however be interested to hear if others have noticed this phenomenon and of any explanations they may have of it.

I have done a number of experiments on the effect of rooting hormone on erica cuttings. The hormone I chose was May and Bakers' "Serdix" No. 3 (Hardwood grade). The active ingredient of the preparation is 4 - (3 - Indalyl) - Butyric Acid. I should like to reproduce the results of these experiments in their entirety.

<i>Cultivar</i>	<i>Date taken</i>	<i>Date Potted on</i>	<i>% Success</i>	
<i>Erica carnea</i>				
'Jennifer Anne'	26.5.73	13.8.73	34.4	hormone
	26.5.73	13.8.73	7.5	no hormone
<i>Erica carnea</i>				
'Vivellii'	25.5.73	29.3.74	23.3	hormone
	26.5.73	29.3.74	20.0	hormone
	26.5.73	29.3.74	37.5	no hormone
<i>Erica carnea</i>				
'Ruby Glow'	8.6.73	23.3.74	33.3	hormone
	8.6.73	23.3.74	1.7	no hormone
	13.4.74	28.7.74	0.0	hormone
	13.4.74	28.7.74	16.0	no hormone
<i>Erica carnea</i>				
Springwood				
White'	13.4.74	18.7.74	44.4	hormone
	13.4.74	18.7.74	37.2	no hormone
<i>Erica carnea</i>				
'Springwood				
Pink'	13.4.74	1.9.74	17.3	hormone
	13.4.74	1.9.74	13.3	no hormone
<i>Erica x darleyensis</i>				
'Jack H. Brummage'				
	19.5.74	28.7.74	72.5	hormone
	19.5.74	28.7.74	0.0	no hormone

These results seem to show that in the case of *Erica carnea* 'Jennifer Anne,' the first batch of *Erica carnea* 'Ruby Glow' and *Erica x darleyensis* 'Jack H. Brumage' the hormone helped in rooting the cuttings. However in the case of the second batch of 'Ruby Glow' and the 'Vivellii' better results were obtained with the untreated cuttings. The differences obtained with the two 'Springwood' cultivars are not thought to be significant.

These results may be interpreted as meaning that hormone rooting powder has no effect in the rooting of *Erica* cuttings or that other variables entered the experiment and outweighed the effect of hormone rooting powder.

I am continuing these experiments and would be pleased to hear of other members' experiences.

Finally I should like to return to my starting point. I set out to find if a critical time existed for success in rooting cuttings and to find out when that time was. I reasoned that if when I had collected sufficient data, I plotted success rate against the date on which the cuttings were taken then good results would tend to cluster in one part of the calendar. As I have already hinted, in the event I did not find this to be the case.

Let us now consider the factors which may affect the rooting of cuttings on a single site. For a cutting to root, the original material must have been in a suitable condition and it must have found favourable conditions in the cutting pot. My own results show that a certain percentage of suitable material is present on the parents plants over a considerable period of time. Support for this view is provided by a letter I received from Mrs. Maginess earlier this year in which she says that she has successfully rooted cuttings taken as early as February and as late as October.

The percentage of suitable material present at any time probably depends not only on the time of year but also on the rainfall and temperature in the preceeding period. I do not know how long a particular shoot remains in a suitable condition for rooting, but this is also probably due to the factor already mentioned.

The conditions in the cutting pot are largely under the control of the individual gardener, but if cuttings are rooted out of doors the temperature of the rooting medium and of the cutting itself will probably have an effect on rooting success.

I realise that there may also be other factors at work, but in the first instance it will be necessary for me to examine my results in the light of weather conditions and cultivars I have used in my experiments. Such an analysis will reveal the presence of other factors but will not necessarily identify them. Techniques which may be suitable for this type of multivariable analysis have been developed in the field of agricultural research and have been described by M. Ergekiel and K. A. Fox (Methods of Correlation and Regression Analysis, John Wiley and Sons, New York 1966).

I have been very fortunate in that the Royal Naval Air Station at Yeovilton, which maintains a weather recording station only a mile and a half from where I have done most of this work, are making their recordings for the past four years available to me, and I am at present preparing to carry out the analysis. This may take some time to complete, but I hope to report my findings in a future issue of the Year Book.



Gazetteer of Heather Names

Part 3. D. McClintock

- maderensis* (originally a *cinerea*, in fact a species) Madeira, 1839.
 Maryland (*Andromeda*) State in USA, 1800.
mauritanica (*arborea*) Mauricio, N. Africa, 1933.
 Mayfair (*Calluna*) Kolaga's Mayfair Nurseries, Pennsylvania, USA, by 1964.
 Mayfair White (*carnea*) Mayfair Nurseries, Pennsylvania, USA, by 1972.
 Melbury White (*Tetralix*) A Common in N. Devon, pre 1966.
 Merton Ruby (*carnea*) Error for 'Myretoun Ruby'.
 Mount Stewart (*australis*) House and garden in Co. Down, AM 1936.
 Mousehole (*Calluna*) Village near Penzance, Cornwall, by 1965.
 Mulfra (*cinerea*) Hill NW of Penzance, Cornwall, 1934.
 Mullion (*Calluna*) Village on Lizard Peninsula, Cornwall, 1923.
 Myretoun Jewel (*carnea*) Castle in Wigton, Scotland near Port William, pre-1965.
 Myretoun Ruby (*carnea*) Castle in Wigton, Scotland, near Port William, pre-1965.
 Nacung (x *Praegeri*) Lough in Co. Donegal, Plant collected 1966.
 Nance (*cinerea*) Village near Penzance, Cornwall, 1953.
 Nassau (*Calluna*) State in Germany, by 1968.
 Naturpark (*Calluna*) Lüneburger Heide Nature Park, Germany. 1972.
 Newick Lilac (*cinerea*) Village of Hardwicks Nurseries, E. Sussex, by 1967.
 Ninnes (*cinerea*) Hamlet N. of Penzance, Cornwall, pre 1942.
numidica (*cinerea*) N. Africa (in fact Morocco), var of Maire by 1963.
olbiensis (*Calluna*) Iles d'Hyères, South of France, var of Albert 1884.
 Orotava (*arborea*) Valley in Tenerife, pre 1972.
 Oxshott Common (*Calluna*) N. of Leatherhead, Surrey, by 1963.
 Penhale (*Calluna*) Village on Lizard Peninsula, Cornwall, by 1927.
 Pennsylvania Branching (*Andromeda*) State of USA, c. 1800.
pennsylvanica (*Andromeda*) State of USA, c. 1892.
pennsylvanica (*Daboecia*) State of USA, c. 1873.
 Pentlandii (*Calluna*) Presumably Pentland Hills, S. of Edinburgh, by 1962.
 Pentreath (*cinerea*) Village in Cornwall, pre 1963.
 Pirbright Pink (*carnea*) Town in Surrey of C. R. Roots' Nursery, c. 1933.
 Poltesco (*cinerea*) Cornish village, by 1972.
portosanciana (*scoparia*) Porto Sancto, Tunis, var. of O. Kuntze.
 Portugal (*Calluna*) Country of Iberian Peninsula, by 1962.

- Pyrenaica (*Calluna*) Presumably mountains of Franco-Spanish frontier, 1924.
- Pyrenees Pink (*vagans*) Presumably mountains of Franco-Spanish frontier, pre-1936.
- Radnor (*Calluna*) Welsh county, c.1955.
- Rannoch (*Calluna*) Moor S. of Glencoe, Argyll, 1964.
- Red Devon (*Calluna*) County in S.E. England, by 1970 – plant found near Holsworthy.
- Red Pentreath (*cinerea*) Sport on 'Pentreath', 1972.
- Redriggs (*cinerea*) Sir W. L. Leeds' garden at Grange over Sands, Lancs. (Seedling c. 1956)
- Riverslea (*australis*) Pritchard's Nurseries at Christchurch, Hants. AM 1946.
- Roma (*Calluna*) Seedling ex M. & B., by 1948.
- Romiley (*cinerea*) Village by Dingle Hollow Nursery, nr. Stockport, Cheshire, pre-1963.
- Roundhill (*australis*) (ex J. Head of Budleigh Salterton), 1935.
- St. Keverne (*vagans*) Village in Cornwall, AM 1914.
- St. Non (*Calluna*) Cliff in Pembrokeshire, Wales, c. 1972.
- Sandpit Hill (*cinerea*) (ex Underwood), pre-1963.
- Sandwood Bay (*Calluna*) S. of Cape Wrath, Sutherland, c. 1959.
- Scotch Mist (*Calluna*) Scotland, c. 1974.
- scotica* (*Andromeda*) Presumably of Scotland, 1838-1852.
- Sherwood Creeping/Sherwoodii (*carnea*) Sherwood Nurseries, Portland, Oregon, pre-1965.
- Sherwood White (*carnea*) Sherwood Nurseries, Portland, Oregon, by 1971.
- Shetland Island (*Tetralix*) N. Scotland, by 1964.
- Sinensis (*cinerea*) – means Chinese. Used for 'C. D. Eason' in Holland 1972.
- Smart's Heath (*carnea*) Lane at Woking, Surrey, pre-1966.
- Snowdon (*Calluna*) Presumably mountain in N. Wales, 1949.
- Soay (*Calluna*) Island of St. Kilda Group, Scotland, late 1960's.
- Hyemalis Southcote (*Calluna*) Dr. R. Gray's house at Hindhead, Surrey, c. 1954.
- Springwood Pink (*carnea*) House of Mrs. R. Walker at Stirling, where seedling found 1931.
- Springwood White (*carnea*) House of finder, Mrs. R. Walker, at Stirling, AM 1930.
- Stapehill (*ciliaris*) C. J. Marchant's Nursery near Wimborne Minister, Dorset, by 1954.
- Stoborough (*ciliaris*) Village near Wareham, Dorset, in 1920's.
- Studland (*cinerea*) Town in S. Dorset, 1927-34.
- Sunningdale (*Calluna*) Town in Berks, 1969.
- Swabia (*Calluna*) State in S. Germany, by 1968.
- Taranto Purple (*cinerea*) Villa Taranto, Pollanza, Italy, seedling by 1966.
- Threipmuir (*Calluna*) Reservoir S. of Edinburgh, by 1937.
- Thule White (*Tetralix*) Thule here—Lewis, used 1968-9.

- Tilford (*cinerea*) Village near Farnham, Surrey, by 1966.
Tiptree (*Calluna*) Town in Essex, 1971.
Tremans (*Calluna*) Mr. Pilkington's house at Horstead Keynes,
c. 1950.
Tresco (*Calluna*) Island in Scilly, 1971.
Truro (*x Watsonii*) City in Cornwall, 1965.
Tully (*Daboecia*) Tully Hill, Renvyle, Co. Galway, 1971.
verinensis (*Tetralix*) Verin in Orense, N.W. Spain, var of Pau 1906.
Westphalia (*Calluna*) State of Germany, by 1967.
White Dale (*cinerea*) A white-flowered plant from Sunningdale,
Berks, by 1971.
Whitehouse (*Tetralix*) (ex N. R. Webster), 1959.
Wickwar Flame (*Calluna*) Village in Glos. of Mr. G. Osmond's
Nursery, by 1972.
Windebrooke (*cinerea*) Near Windlesham, Surrey, by 1973.
Wishanger Pink (*australis*) Brig. J. Evans house at Churt, Surrey,
1957.
Wood Close (*Calluna*) Bungalow at Upper Woolhampton, Berks.
of W. R. A. Parsons, finder, c. 1970.
Wych (*ciliaris*) Heath near Wareham, Dorset, by 1931.
Zennor (*cinerea*) Village in S. Cornwall, pre-1952.



Recent Writings on Heathers 1974

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- GRANT, S. A. and HUNTER R. F. Ecotypic Differentiation of *Calluna vulgaris* L. in relation to altitude. *New Phytologist* 61 pp. 44-55.
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